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Enock, Charles Reginald

The remedy for unemployment

[Petersfield, Hants, Eng.]

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THE REMEDY
FOR
UNEMPLOYMENT.

An "Auxiliary Industrial System": To absorb Unemployment and prevent Poverty: The System of Self-supporting Group Industry. :: :: :: ::

C. R. ENOCK

Sometime Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Royal Society of Arts Medallist, Member of the Society of Engineers, Lecturer before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, etc., Author of "The New Theocentric Science of Life, and the *Genius redivivus* of Enoch of Genesis and Sumer," etc.

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FROXFIELD, PETERSFIELD, HANTS, ENGLAND.
A.D. 1929—1930 and henceforward.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Unemployment reveals an un-Christian, unnatural and dangerous element in our civilization.

Oct. 4 1930 DA/Rec

The Remedy for Unemployment.

GROUP INDUSTRY.

The fact has now to be faced that Unemployment is an inevitable part of our modern industrial system, and not a mere passing thing. No political party or government has been able to provide a remedy for it. Why is this? The reply is that the remedy lies upon broader and more natural and intelligent or scientific lines than those so far considered; scientific but simple, like all great principles; and what the remedy is, it is the purpose of this pamphlet to shew.

First of all it must be realised that unemployment is a condition arising out of over-competition in the production and sale of manufactured commodities, together with the decrease in the purchasing power of money. Competition has increased everywhere, with a consequent shrinkage of markets which this country formerly enjoyed. Other nations are producing for themselves and consequently ceasing to buy from us, which is natural; and they are also invading both our home and our foreign markets with their products. But most countries are suffering from unemployment. It is acute in Germany, the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia and other communities. We see that unemployment is not a question either of over-population or lack of national wealth and resources, for Canada and Australia with their small populations and enormous areas and natural resources are in the same predicament, and they are now restricting or prohibiting immigration from this country in view of their own out-of-works problem; and in this respect our great empire cannot help us; whilst the United States, now said to be the richest country in the world, has several millions of unemployed.

The only thing that will help us and the world in general is to look outside conventional methods and face the problem impartially, ethically and scientifically. Let Britain lead the way. So far the attempt to meet the situation is in unemployment grants and "doles," and by making work, as road-building, and so forth, and by subsidizing certain industries; and lesser matters. Some of the work provided is of course useful and beneficial, but some of it is wasteful and otherwise unnecessary. In any case the work can provide occupation for only a relatively small part of the unemployed, and as hard manual labour can only be done by those adapted to it, this leaves out the people of other occupations, and the women.

Many politicians and economists and leaders of industry say that the only real remedy is in an increase in trade. But it is a delusion to suppose that trade will ever increase sufficiently to absorb more than a part of the unemployed. It may increase somewhat, or it may not increase. We must of course endeavour to hold our own in the world's markets, but the very policy of "capturing markets" causes unemployment somewhere. If you capture other people's markets what becomes of them—or of you if they capture yours? All this has its natural limits, and we seem to have reached them. And we cannot even protect our home markets and industries. Finally, it should not be forgotten that even when trade was prosperous all round, in the years preceding the war, there was a large body of unemployed workers; and that there have always been great numbers of people of all grades of education and occupations and of both sexes to whom present economic conditions offer no adequate means of livelihood, even if they are not officially "unemployed."

II.

The only solution of this tremendous problem and the remedy for unemployment and poverty lies in creating what is here termed an "Auxiliary Industrial System"; a system not subject to the competition which is the cause of unemployment, and in which people and workers of all trades and classes who cannot make a living under ordinary industrial conditions would have the means of self-supporting work and livelihood.

But what would be the methods of such an Auxiliary System? The reply is: in "Group Industry," as set forth here.

Briefly, the principle involved is that so far unrealised one of the self-supplying or reciprocal industrial group, the "Economic Group." We should set up in any and every locality or neighbourhood where needful or desirable, a group or groups of workers of all trades and occupations possible, to produce and exchange within such group or groups the necessaries and luxuries of life; food, clothing, furniture, appliances and all else possible, manufacturing and agricultural, workshop, and land; the primary purpose being to supply their own wants, not to sell elsewhere, which would but cause further competition. They would create their own market in their midst, and not encroach on others. It is seen that such a group is creating employment for its members; the producers of one kind of commodity being the consumers of another kind of commodity. And the natural reciprocal ratio of one kind of trade with the others would be established, so eliminating over-production of any product within the group or surplus worker therein. The members of the group would exchange their products—bread, boots, clothing, farm products, appliances, furniture, utensils, etc.—either direct or for money, if they had money, whichever were preferred; but the underlying principle is that of goods for goods and services for services, among people who are without money and cannot obtain it in exchange for their work in the labour market. There would be a group-quota of production for the purchase either by exchange or for money of raw material which could not be produced within the group. Further, groups devoted to one kind of commodity could exchange with groups devoted to another kind. There could be such specialist groups in industries not capable of decentralization, as coal-mining, fishing, etc., exchanging their commodities with those of other groups. The purpose is to avoid competition and further congestion in the open market. Such groups would be, as far as such is possible, self-supporting or self-supplying economic units. Or they would be so in important respects.

This of course is not Communism or Socialism. It is the natural system of reciprocal, co-operative production

and interchange. It is not a money-making system; the purpose is to make and enjoy the needful things of life—in fact to *live*, which otherwise they cannot do except in idleness and at the cost of the State and of charity. It is the basis of an Auxiliary Industrial System, carried on side by side with the ordinary system.

There is no limit to the number or size of the groups which could be established: the internal ratio being maintained. Workers who could not find a place in one group would seek or form another, or adopt another trade. To start the groups in any given place government funds would be used, money at present swallowed up in unemployment pay; and municipal, local and neighbourly help should be forthcoming. And heaven helps those who help themselves—and here is the practical method of doing it and making an honourable and independent livelihood.

The industries to be established would be of every possible kind. Each group, or group of groups, would have its textile mill, to make its own fabrics, woodworking plant, light iron works, and other workshops, its farm, cornfields, sheep and cattle, dairy, market-garden—any or all of such things as were possible or advisable; and they would be established under expert control and set up their governing committees. Existing buildings would be used as far as possible at first, but building would be part of the co-operative work, and houses would be built co-operatively. Here indeed the housing problem could be assisted. The land and farms would have to be provided by government funds, and possibly landowners would give land. Social centres and restaurants could be established, especially if neighbourly relations were systematically fostered among the members, so perhaps minimising housework for the women. In fact every possible form of activity.

The groups need not be and should not be regarded as mere "Unemployment Colonies," but as "Auxiliary Industrial Clubs," or Associations; membership would include anyone who wished to work and take part in them, people of all classes, with or without private means, and indeed independent persons would be urged to take a part, so creating a higher status for the system. There are many such people in our country towns and parishes and elsewhere who might welcome the opportunity of positively engaging in work and handicrafts, if only for the sake of interesting and health-giving occupation and exercise, but who at present have no such outlet for their energies and ingenuity, industry being a closed field to them as things are. Yet there is a sheer delight in positively making things, things of real use and beauty, creative work in fact, which appeals to almost everybody. In every neighbourhood are more or less independent folk who suffer from stagnation and boredom, or whose only escape is in carrying on more or less "pious" activities or associations which though valuable often overlap each other. The "Local Auxiliaries" would be salvation for them. And many lonely folk would here find neighbourly association. Here in fact is the very practical outlet for that neighbourly spirit and desire to do something for the community which is a growing feature to-day. And many educated folk of small means could by these co-operative and exchange methods obtain things which they cannot afford to buy for money. At present the only form of "home," "local," or "rural" industry is in making more or less superfluous articles which have to find a market somewhere or other, often at sweated prices, or bought out of charity.

These Auxiliary Groups could be established anywhere, in town or country, wherever a sufficient number of persons could be organised to form such. For example, in the slums or poorer quarters of London, or any city, where innumerable folk struggle for life or a job at present, any given area or parish could set up its Club and with its group motor-lorry or car could have ready access to its group farm; whose working would indeed afford alternative and rural occupation and enjoyment. So too with those poor suburbs where innumerable people live heaven knows how, living half a life, without hope or prospects for the future. All this is possible. In country towns and parishes there would be no spoiling of the amentities of the countryside, for the workshops or factories to be established would be small and in keeping with the surroundings; in fact the movement would carry with it a science of "Industry-Planning" and "Country-

Planning," which we lack, and which would work against the present " uglification " of the rural areas.

It is seen that work on the land, the farming or small-holding, would be reciprocal with the work in the workshops or factory : the one furnishes the demand or market for the other ; the one without the other would fail. Merely to put the unemployed " on the land," as often advocated, would be useless or disastrous : they would have no market for their products, no sufficient means of exchange.

In the coal-mining areas and villages the unemployed miners would no doubt readily adapt themselves to the needful variety of occupations—capable folk as they are ; and so too with iron-workers and others. The textile workers might be in demand all over the kingdom as " instructors " in the groups. (Here's a chance for Manchester !)

The produce-exchange or group-market would of course be methodically controlled ; the producer of any given commodity would be entitled to draw against any other commodities.

The foregoing of course is but a statement of methods : details would have to be worked out.

III.

This Auxiliary Industrial System would bring important social and economic benefits to the whole community as time went on. It would tend to distribute the population more evenly over the country, drawing off congested city areas and taking people back perhaps to their native country districts ; and bring an increase in land working and food production to the decadent countryside. It is the remedy for the slums. It would form a reservoir of skilled and all other labour and places for apprenticeship. Other economic and moral benefits would result.

To establish the system and to begin to set up the groups may seem a difficult task, and there would of course be obstacles to be overcome. The difficulties appear great because it is a new departure. And as Plato's motto says, " Everything that is good is difficult " ; but the difficulties should begin to disappear when tackled. The dry bones of unemployment can be made to live and move if we will breathe upon them with a true spirit of organisation and neighbourly resolve. Moreover, there is the spur of necessity. This Auxiliary system is the only remedy for unemployment, the only solution of the problem. Politicians are hereby challenged to produce any other—except that which they have all been forced to adopt, namely, the spending of public funds in relief measures ; work which can benefit only a certain number and sooner or later must come to an end. In their own words, politicians " Cannot get rabbits out of a hat," be they Socialist, Conservative or Liberal. This remedy is the true remedy, because it rests on a natural, a logical and an ethical basis. The only alternative is an endless vista of dreadful, debasing and expensive unemployment and misery, and per haps worse things. Unemployment reveals an un Christian, unnatural and dangerous element in our civilisation. The matter ought to inspire all who care for the well-being of their fellows ; and the present spectacle of these worthy but unfortunate brethren of ours, workers without work or hope and poor struggling housewives, brave souls, is enough to break one's heart in despair of civilisation, and should bid us look to something beyond our conventional ideas of to-day.

Let therefore the government, or any that might soon succeed it, take hold of the matter without delay and set up an organisation to establish local Auxiliary Working Groups wherever required—and that is in innumerable places throughout the kingdom. The government that will do this would deserve well of the country and be likely to retain office. And County Councils and Municipal and other Local Governments could act on their own initiative or with government co-operation. Philanthropic bodies could assist. Great sums of money have been collected from a generous public to help the unemployed and the poor, and further collections are inevitable ; but under the new relief system here proposed, of the Auxiliary Groups, this money would be of permanent instead of passing benefit.

Public works might be carried out by the same co-operative methods or by part payment in group-manufactured commodities.

Lastly, the principle of the self-supplying group industry offers the means of peopling the Dominions, and with our own folk ; it offers the basis of a science of empire-development. Such groups, extablished on grants of land in

Canada or Australia, etc., would not come into competition with ordinary labour and markets there, but would create new centres of life. They would be people of all kinds, not merely land workers. Perhaps the system could be extended to the development of our Crown Colonies and tropical products, groups co-operating with home groups. There is no other method by which the Dominions can be peopled more rapidly than their small natural growth of population allows, and no other method by which they can be made of positive service to the Mother country in her economic troubles, except of course in imperial trade.

The Imperial Government and the Dominions should at once begin to set up Settlement Groups in Canada and Australia or even South Africa, etc., not of " unemployed " necessarily, but of would-be settlers of all callings, upon the above principles. The so-called " group settlement " which has been carried out lacks the fundamental principles of reciprocal production and could not succeed in any considerable degree. As for ordinary emigration, it tends to reproduce existing troubles ; and moreover settlers will not now face the loneliness of life in remote places. We must have scientifically established centres of life in new areas. It is unthinkable that these vast Dominions cannot be caused to help us—and help themselves, in the growing struggle for life now manifested everywhere.

The foregoing remedy for Unemployment is in reality part of a science of corporate life which will have to be generally considered in the future, involving what the Author has termed the " Topographical or Territorial Adjustment of Industry " ; the decentralization of industry and local industrial development, as against the over-centralization and commercialism of industry which is at the root of most of our economic and political troubles.

* * * * * * *

The author has brought forward the foregoing matter in various publications, and addresses before technical and other bodies ; as at the Royal Society of Arts, in 1913 ; The British Association ; Society of Engineers, etc., and his books " Can we set the World in Order ? " 1917 ; " The New Theocentric Science of Life," 1927 ; " An Imperial Commonwealth," 1910, etc. ; and at the Economic Truth Shop which he established in the Adelphi, London in 1928.

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